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LETTER DATED 21 JULY 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 20 July 1998 from Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq, concerning a misinformation campaign being waged by United States officials for the purpose of justifying their aggressive policy towards Iraq and prolonging the inhuman embargo being maintained against the people of Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 20 July 1998 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the President of the Security Council

Further to my letter of 2 July 1998 (S/1998/606, annex), I should like to draw your attention to the fact that the United States Administration continues to perpetrate acts of hostility against the people and Government of Iraq and against the country's sovereignty, in flagrant violation of the norms of international law, the precepts governing relations between States and the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

The entire world has learned how the United States Administration lied about the missile attack by United States fighter aircraft on a complex of water storage tanks in Basra Governorate on 30 June 1998, claiming that military units in the area had used radar equipment to lock on to United Kingdom aircraft that were violating Iraq's airspace. Nevertheless, given the determination of the United States Administration to continue its acts of aggression while inventing flimsy and illogical pretexts to justify them, the Permanent Representative of the United States to the United Nations said in an interview with the Fox television network, an American company, on 5 July 1998 that the attack had been an isolated incident and that "the Iraqis violated the no-fly zone military protocol, military rules of engagement".

I should like to know to what particular protocol the Ambassador was referring in the interview. The Security Council and the United States Administration itself are in a better position than anyone to know that the no-fly zones were imposed by the United States Administration as a pure and deliberate act of hostility, that they have no basis whatsoever in law and that no provision is made for them under any of the Security Council resolutions on Iraq. While Security Council resolutions do contain harsh provisions concerning Iraq and its people, they nonetheless affirm the country's unity, sovereignty and territorial integrity.

I should also like to know which "military rules of engagement" the United States Ambassador was referring to. He and his Government know very well that there were no military units in the area where the United States fighter aircraft carried out the attack and that no air defence unit in any part of Basra Governorate was transmitting electronic signals.

Furthermore, the personal attacks that were made against the President of the Republic of Iraq during the same interview are inconsistent with the rules of decorum and diplomatic usage. Such behaviour demonstrates, most regrettably, how base is the political language used by United States officials when speaking about my country.

The mendacity and deception practised by United States officials have become more insistent of late, a clear sign of the nervousness and hysteria that afflict them when the comprehensive and unjust embargo being maintained against the people of Iraq is under discussion. This is particularly so at a time when

Iraq has discharged all of its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions and when more voices are calling for an end to the inhuman embargo.

The United States Administration is therefore behaving in ways that reflect an overwhelming sense of hysteria among its officials, causing them to provoke crises and propagate lies in order to mislead world opinion and deceive the members of the Security Council and the international community into believing that Iraq has yet to discharge its obligations under the relevant Security Council resolutions. This is done to pave the way for the blocking of any serious attempt by the Security Council to lift the comprehensive embargo being maintained against the people of Iraq, an embargo whose victims number hundreds of thousands of children, women and older persons.

In condemning the statements made by the Permanent Representative of the United States, I should like, through you, to invite the Security Council to reject the attempts of the United States to prolong the embargo and to block the serious international efforts being made to have it lifted. I further call upon the Security Council to meet its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations and to reject the repeated threats made by the United States to the security of Iraq's people and to the unity and integrity of its territory.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq